

Jewish History, Jewish Religion

Chapter 1

A Closed Utopia?

I write here what I think is true, for the stories of the Greeks are numerous and in my opinion ridiculous ; Hecateus of Miletis, as quoted by Herodotus. Amicus Plato sed magis amica veritas . — Plato is a friend but truth is a greater friend. Traditional paraphrase of a passage of Aristotele's Ethics In a free state every man can think what he wants and say what he thinks Spinoza

THIS BOOK, although written in English and addressed to people living outside the State of Israel, is, in a way, a continuation of my political activities as an Israeli Jew. Those activities began in 1965-6 with a protest which caused a considerable scandal at the time: I had personally witnessed an ultra-religious Jew refuse to allow his phone to be used on the Sabbath in order to call an ambulance for a non-Jew who happened to have collapsed in his Jerusalem neighbourhood. Instead of simply publishing the incident in the press, I asked for a meeting which is composed of rabbis nominated by the State of Israel. I asked them whether such behavior was consistent with their interpretation of the Jewish religion. They answered that the Jew in question had behaved correctly, indeed piously, and backed their statement by referring me to a passage in an authoritative compendium of Talmudic laws, written in this century. I reported the incident to the main Hebrew daily, Ha'aretz, whose publication of the story caused a media scandal.

The results of the scandal were, for me, rather negative. Neither the Israeli, nor the diaspora, rabbinical authorities ever reversed their ruling that a Jew should

not violate the Sabbath in order to save the life of a Gentile. They added much sanctimonious twaddle to the effect that if the consequence of such an act puts Jews in danger, the violation of the Sabbath is permitted, for their sake. It became apparent to me, as drawing on Talmudic laws governing the relations between Jews and non-Jews, that neither Zionism, including its seemingly secular part, [2] nor Israeli politics since the inception of the State of Israel, nor particularly the policies of the Jewish supporters of Israel in the diaspora, could be understood unless the deeper influence of those laws, and the worldview which they both create and express is taken into account. The actual policies Israel pursued after the Six Day War, and in particular the apartheid character of the Israeli regime in the Occupied Territories and the attitude of the majority of Jews to the issue of the rights of the Palestinians, even in the abstract, have merely strengthened this conviction.

By making this statement I am not trying to ignore the political or strategic considerations which may have also influenced the rulers of Israel. I am merely saying that actual politics is an interaction between realistic considerations (whether valid or mistaken, moral or immoral in my view) and ideological influences. The latter tend to be more influential the less they are discussed and 'dragged into the light'. Any form of racism, discrimination and xenophobia becomes more potent and politically influential if it is taken for granted by the society which indulges in it. This is especially so if its discussion is prohibited, either formally or by tacit agreement.

When racism, discrimination and xenophobia is prevalent among Jews, and directed against non-Jews, being fueled by religious motivations, it is like its

opposite case, that of antisemitism and its religious motivations. Today, however, while the second is being discussed, the very existence of the first is generally ignored, more outside Israel than within it.

Defining the Jewish State

Without a discussion of the prevalent Jewish attitudes to non-Jews, even the concept of Israel as 'a Jewish state', as Israel formally defines itself, cannot be understood. The widespread misconception that Israel, even without considering its regime in the Occupied Territories, is a true democracy arises from the refusal to confront the significance of the term 'a Jewish state' for non-Jews. In my view, Israel as a Jewish state constitutes a danger not only to itself and its inhabitants, but to all Jews and to all other peoples and states in the Middle East and beyond. I also consider that other Middle Eastern states or entities which define themselves as 'Arab' or 'Muslim', like the Israeli self-definition as being 'Jewish', likewise constitute a danger. However, while this danger is widely discussed, the danger inherent in the Jewish character of the State of Israel is not.

The principle of Israel as 'a Jewish state' was supremely important to Israeli politicians from the inception of the state and was inculcated into the Jewish population by all conceivable ways. When, in the early 1980s, a tiny minority of Israeli Jews emerged which opposed this concept, a Constitutional Law (that is, a law overriding provisions of other laws, which cannot be revoked except by a special procedure) was passed in 1985 by an enormous majority of the Knesset. By this law no party whose programme openly opposes the principle of 'a Jewish state' or proposes to change it by democratic means, is allowed to participate in the elections to the Knesset. I myself strongly oppose this constitutional

principle. The legal consequence for me is that I cannot belong, in the state of which I am a citizen, to a party having principles with which I would agree and which is allowed to participate in Knesset elections. Even this example shows that the State of Israel is not a democracy due to the application of a Jewish ideology directed against all non-Jews and those Jews who oppose this ideology. But the danger which this dominant ideology represents is not limited to domestic affairs. It also influences Israeli foreign policies. This danger will continue to grow, as long as two currently operating developments are being strengthened: the increase in the Jewish character of Israel and the increase in its power, particularly in nuclear power. Another ominous factor is that Israeli influence in the USA political establishment is also increasing. Hence accurate information about Judaism, and especially about the treatment of non-Jews by Israel, is now not only important, but politically vital as well.

Let me begin with the official Israeli definition of the term 'Jewish', illustrating the crucial difference between Israel as 'a Jewish state' and the majority of other states. By this official definition, Israel 'belongs' to persons who are defined by the Israeli authorities as 'Jewish', irrespective of where they live, and to them alone. On the other hand, Israel doesn't officially 'belong' to its non-Jewish citizens, whose status is considered even officially as inferior. This means in practice that if members of a Peruvian tribe are converted to Judaism, and thus regarded as Jewish, they are entitled at once to become Israeli citizens and benefit from the approximately 70 per cent of the West Bank land (and the 92 per cent of the area of Israel proper), officially designated only for the benefit of Jews. All non-Jews (not only all Palestinians) are prohibited from benefiting

from those lands. (The prohibition applies even to Israeli Arabs who served in the Israeli army and reached a high rank.) The case involving Peruvian converts to Judaism actually occurred a few years ago. The newly-created Jews were settled in [4] the West Bank, near Nablus, on land from which non-Jews are officially excluded.

All Israeli governments are taking enormous political risks, including the risk of war, so that such settlements, composed exclusively of persons who are defined as 'Jewish' (and not 'Israeli' as most of the media mendaciously claims) would be subject to only 'Jewish' authority.

I suspect that the Jews of the USA or of Britain would regard it as antisemitic if Christians would propose that the USA or the United Kingdom should become a 'Christian state', belonging only to citizens officially defined as 'Christians'. The consequence of such doctrine is that Jews converting to Christianity would become full citizens because of their conversion. It should be recalled that the benefits of conversions are well known to Jews from their own history. When the Christian and the Islamic states used to discriminate against all persons not belonging to the religion of the state, including the Jews, the discrimination against Jews was at once removed by their conversion. But a non-Jew discriminated against by the State of Israel will cease to be so treated the moment he or she converts to Judaism. This simply shows that the same kind of exclusivity that is regarded by a majority of the diaspora Jews as antisemitic is regarded by the majority of all Jews as Jewish. To oppose both antisemitism and Jewish chauvinism is widely regarded among Jews as a 'self-hatred', a concept which I regard as nonsensical.

The meaning of the term 'Jewish' and its cognates,

including 'Judaism', thus becomes in the context of Israeli politics as important as the meaning of 'Islamic', when officially used by Iran, or 'communist' when it was officially used by the USSR. However, the meaning of the term 'Jewish' as it is popularly used is not clear, either in Hebrew or when translated into other languages, and so the term had to be defined officially.

According to Israeli law a person is considered 'Jewish' if either their mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother were Jewesses by religion; or if the person was converted to Judaism in a way satisfactory to the Israeli authorities, and on condition that the person has not converted from Judaism to another religion, in which case Israel ceases to regard them as 'Jewish'. Of the three conditions, the first represents the Talmudic definition of 'who is a Jew', a defintion followed by Jewish Orthodoxy. The Talmud and post-Talmudic rabbinic law also recognise the conversion of a non-Jew to Judaism (as well as the purchase of a nonJewish slave by a Jew followed by a different kind of conversion) as a method of becoming Jewish, provided that the conversion is performed by authorised rabbis in a proper manner. This 'proper manner' [5] entails for females, their inspection by three rabbis while naked in a 'bath of purification', a ritual which, although notorious to all readers of the Hebrew press, is not often mentioned by the English media in spite of its undoubted interest for certain readers. I hope that this book will be the beginning of a process which will rectify this discrepancy.

But there is another urgent necessity for an official definition of who is, and who is not 'Jewish'. The State of Israel officially discriminates in favour of Jews and against non-Jews in many domains of life, of which I

regard three as being most important: **residency rights, the right to work and the right to equality before the law.**

Discrimination in residency is based on the fact that about 92 per cent of Israel's land is the property of the state and is administered by the Israel Land Authority according to regulations issued by the Jewish National Fund (JNF), and affiliate of the World Zionist Organization. In its regulations the JNF denies the right to reside, to open a business, and often to work, to anyone who is not Jewish, only because he is not Jewish. At the same time, Jews are not prohibited from taking residence or opening businesses anywhere in Israel. If applied in another state against the Jews, such discriminatory practice would instantly and justifiably be labelled antisemitism and would no doubt spark massive public protests. When applied by Israel as a part of its 'Jewish ideology', they are usually studiously ignored or excused when rarely mentioned.

The denial of the right to work means that non-Jews are prohibited officially from working on land administered by the Israel Land Authority according to the JNF regulations. No doubt these regulations are not always, or even often, enforced but they do exist. From time to time Israel attempts enforcement campaigns by state authorities, as, for example, when the Agriculture Ministry acts against 'the pestilence of letting fruit orchards belonging to Jews and situated on National Land [i.e., land belonging to the State of Israel] be harvested by Arab labourers', even if the labourers in question are citizens of Israel. Israel also strictly prohibits Jews settled on 'National Land' to sub-rent even a part of their land to Arabs, even for a short time; and those who do so are punished, usually by heavy fines. There is no prohibitions on non-Jews renting their land to

Jews. This means, in my own case, that by virtue of being a Jew I have the right to lease an orchard for harvesting its produce from another Jew, but a non-Jew, whether a citizen of Israel or a resident alien, does not have this right.

Non-Jewish citizens of Israel do not have the right to equality before the law. This discrimination is expressed in many [6] Israeli laws in which, presumably in order to avoid embarrassment, the terms 'Jewish' and 'non-Jewish' are usually not explicitly stated, as they are in the crucial Law of Return. According to that law only persons officially recognised as 'Jewish' have an automatic right of entry to Israel and of settling in it. They automatically receive an 'immigration certificate' which provides them on arrival with 'citizenship by virtue of having returned to the Jewish homeland', and with the right to many financial benefits, which vary somewhat according to the country from which they emigrated. The Jews who emigrate from the states of the former UUSSR receive 'an absorption grant' of more than \$20,000 per family. All Jews immigrating to Israel according to this law immediately acquire the right to vote in elections and to be elected to the Knesset -- even if they do not speak a word of Hebrew.

Other Israeli laws substitute the more obtuse expressions 'anyone who can immigrate in accordance with the Law of Return' and 'anyone who is not entitled to immigrate in accordance with the law of Return'. Depending on the law in question, benefits are either granted to the first category and systematically denied to the second. The routine means for enforcing discrimination in everyday life is the ID card, which everyone is obliged to carry at all times. ID cards list the official 'nationality' of a person, which can be 'Jewish',

'Arab', 'Druze' and the like, with the significant exception of 'Israeli'. Attempts to force the Interior Minister to allow Israelis wishing to be officially described as 'Israeli', or even as 'Israeli-Jew' in their ID cards have failed. Those who have attempted to do so have a letter from the Ministry of the Interior stating that 'it was decided not to recognise an Israeli nationality'. The letter does not specify who made this decision or when.

There are so many laws and regulations in Israel which discriminate in favour of the persons defined in Israel as those 'who can immigrate in accordance with the Law of Return' that the subject demands separate treatment. We can look here at one example, seemingly trivial in comparison with residence restrictions, but nevertheless important since it reveals the real intentions of the Israeli legislator. Israeli citizens who left the country for a time but who are defined as those who 'can immigrate in accordance with the Law of Return' are eligible on their return to generous customs benefits, to receive subsidy for their children's high school education, and to receive either a grant or a loan on easy terms for the purchase of an apartment, as well as other benefits. Citizens who cannot be so defined, in other words, the non-Jewish citizens of Israel, get none of these benefits. The obvious intention of such discriminatory measures [7] is to decrease the number of non-Jewish citizens of Israel, in order to make Israel a more 'Jewish' state.

The Ideology of 'Redeemed' Land

Israel also propagates among its Jewish citizens an exclusivist ideology of the Redemption of Land. Its official aim of minimizing the number of non-Jews can be well perceived in this ideology , which is inculcated to Jewish schoolchildren in Israel. They are taught that it is

applicable to the entire extent of either the State of Israel or, after 1967, to what is referred to as the Land of Israel. According to this ideology, the land which has been 'redeemed' is the land which has passed from non-Jewish ownership to Jewish ownership. The ownership can be either private, or belong to either the JNF or the Jewish state. The land which belongs to non-Jews is, on the contrary, considered to be 'unredeemed'. Thus, if a Jew who committed the blackest crimes which can be imagined buys a piece of land from a virtuous non-Jew, the 'unredeemed' land becomes 'redeemed' by such a transaction. However, if a virtuous non-Jew purchases land from the worst Jew, the formerly pure and 'redeemed' land becomes 'unredeemed' again. The logical conclusion of such an ideology is the expulsion, called 'transfer', of all non-Jews from the area of land which has to be 'redeemed'. Therefore the Utopia of the 'Jewish ideology' adopted by the State of Israel is a land which is wholly 'redeemed' and none of it is owned or worked by non-Jews. The leaders of the Zionist labour movement expressed this utterly repellent idea with the greatest clarity. Walter Laquer a devoted Zionist, tells in his History of Zionism (1) how one of these spiritual fathers, A.D. Gordon, who died in 1919, 'objected to violence in principle and justified self defence only in extreme circumstances. But he and his friends wanted every tree and bush in the Jewish homeland to be planted by nobody else except Jewish pioneers'. This means that they wanted everybody else to just go away and leave the land to be 'redeemed' by Jews.

Gordon's successors added more violence than he intended but the principle of 'redemption' and its consequences have remained.

In the same way, the kibbutz, widely hailed as an

attempt to create a Utopia, was and is an exclusivist Utopia; even if it is composed of atheists, it does not accent Arab members on principle and demands that potential members from other nationalities be first converted to Judaism. No wonder the kibbutz boys can be regarded as the most militaristic segment of the Israeli jewish society.

It is this exclusivist ideology, rather than all the 'security [8] needs' alleged by Israeli propaganda, which determines the takeovers of land in Israel in the 1950s and again in the mid-1960s and in the Occupied Territories after 1967. This ideology also dictated official Israeli plans for 'the Judaization of Galilee'.

This curious term means encouraging Jews to settle in Galilee by giving them financial benefits. (I wonder what would be the reaction of US Jews if a plan for 'the Christianization of New York' or even only of Brooklyn, would be proposed in their country.) But the Redemption of the Land implies more than regional 'Judaization'.

In the entire area of Israel the JNF, vigorously backed by Israeli state agencies (especially by the secret police) is spending great sums of public money in order to 'redeem' any land which non-Jews are willing to sell, and to preempt any attempt by a Jew to sell his land to a non-Jew by paying him a higher price.

Israeli Expansionism

The main danger which Israel, as 'a Jewish state', poses to its own people, to other Jews and to its neighbors, is its ideologically motivated pursuit of territorial expansion and the inevitable series of wars resulting from this aim. The more Israel becomes Jewish or, as one says in Hebrew, the more it 'returns to Judaism' (a process which has been under way in Israel at least since 1967),

the more its actual politics are guided by Jewish ideological considerations and less by rational ones. My use of the term 'rational' does not refer here to a moral evaluation of Israeli policies, or to the supposed defence or security needs of Israel - even less so to the supposed needs of 'Israeli survival'. I am referring here to Israeli imperial policies based on its presumed interests. However morally bad or politically crass such policies are, I regard the adoption of policies based on 'Jewish ideology', in all its different versions as being even worse. The ideological defence of Israeli policies are usually based on Jewish religious beliefs or, in the case of secular Jews, on the 'historical rights' of the Jews which derive from those beliefs and retain the dogmatic character of religious faith.

My own early political conversion from admirer of Ben-Gurion to his dedicated opponent began exactly with such an issue. In 1956 I eagerly swallowed all of Ben Gurion's political and military reasons for Israel initiating the Suez War, until he (in spite of being an atheist, proud of his disregard of the commandments of Jewish religion) pronounced in the Knesset on the third day of that war, that the real reason for it is 'the restoration of the kingdom of David and Solomon' to its Biblical borders.

At this point in his speech, almost every Knesset [9] member spontaneously rose and sang the Israeli national anthem. To my knowledge, no zionist politician has ever repudiated Ben-Gurion's idea that Israeli policies must be based (within the limits of pragmatic considerations) on the restoration of the Biblical borders as the borders of the Jewish state. Indeed, close analysis of Israeli grand strategies and actual principles of foreign policy, as they are expressed in Hebrew, makes it clear

that it is 'Jewish ideology', more than any other factor, which determines actual Israeli policies. The disregard of Judaism as it really is and of 'Jewish ideology' makes those policies incomprehensible to foreign observers who usually know nothing about Judaism except crude apologetics.

Let me give a more recent illustration of the essential difference which exists between Israeli imperial planning of the most inflated but secular type, and the principles of 'Jewish ideology'. The latter enjoins that land which was either ruled by any Jewish ruler in ancient times or was promised by God to the Jews, either in the Bible or - what is actually more important politically - according to a rabbinic interpretation of the Bible and the Talmud, should belong to Israel since it is a Jewish state. No doubt, many Jewish 'doves' are of the opinion that such conquest should be deferred to a time when Israel will be stronger than it is now, or that there would be, hopefully, a 'peaceful conquest', that is , that the Arab rulers or peoples would be 'persuaded' to cede the land in question in return for benefits which the Jewish state would then confer on them.

A number of discrepant versions of Biblical borders of the Land of Israel, which rabbinical authorities interpret as ideally belonging to the Jewish state, are in circulation. The most far-reaching among them include the following areas within these borders: in the south, all of Sinai and a part of nothern Egypt up to the environs of Cairo; in the east, all of Jordan and a large chunk of Saudi Arabia, all of Kuwait and a part of Iraq south of the Euphrates; in the north, all of Lebanon and all of Syria together with a huge part of Turkey (up to lake Van); and in the west, Cyprus. An enormous body of research and learned discussion based on these borders, embodied in

atlases, books, articles and more popular forms of propaganda is being published in Israel, often with state subsidies, or other forms of support. Certainly the late Kahane and his followers, as well as influential bodies such as Gush Emunim, not only desire the conquest of those territories by Israel, but regard it as a divinely commanded act, sure to be successful since it will be aided by God. In fact, important Jewish religious figures regard the Israeli refusal to undertake such a holy war, or even [10] worse, the return of Sinai to Egypt, as a national sin which was justly punished by God. One of the more influential Gush Emunim rabbis, Dov Lior, the rabbi of Jewish settlements of Kiryat Arba and of Hebron, stated repeatedly that the Israeli failure to conquer Lebanon in 1982-5 was a well-merited divine punishment for its sin of 'giving a part of Land of Israel', namely Sinai, to Egypt.

Although I have chosen an admittedly extreme example of the Biblical borders of the Land of Israel which 'belong' to the 'Jewish state', those borders are quite popular in national-religious circles. There are less extreme versions of Biblical borders, sometimes also called 'historical borders'. It should however be emphasized that within Israel and the community of its diaspora Jewish supporters, the validity of the concept of either Biblical borders or historical borders as delineating the borders of land which belongs to Jews by right is not denied on grounds of principle, except by the tiny minority which opposes the concept of a Jewish state. Otherwise, objections to the realisation of such borders by a war are purely pragmatical. One can claim that Israel is now too weak to conquer all the land which 'belongs' to the Jews, or that the loss of Jewish lives (but not of Arab lives!) entailed in a war of conquest of such magnitude is more important than the conquest of the

land, but in normative Judaism one cannot claim that 'the Land of Israel', in whatever borders, does not 'belong' to all the Jews. In May 1993, Ariel Sharon formally proposed in the Likud Convention that Israel should adopt the 'Biblical borders' concept as its official policy.

There were rather few objections to this proposal, either in the Likud or outside it, and all were based on pragmatic grounds. No one even asked Sharon where exactly are the Biblical borders which he was urging that Israel should attain. Let us recall that among those who call themselves Leninists there was no doubt that history follows the principles laid out by Marx and Lenin. It is not only the belief itself, however dogmatic, but the refusal that it should ever be doubted, by thwarting open discussion, which creates a totalitarian cast of mind. Israeli-Jewish society and diaspora Jews who are leading 'Jewish lives' and organised in purely Jewish organisations, can be said therefore to have a strong streak of totalitarianism in their character.

However, an Israeli grand strategy, not based on the tenets of 'Jewish ideology', but based on purely strategic or imperial considerations had also developed since the inception of the state. An authoritative and lucid description of the principles governing such strategy was given by General (Reserves) Shlomo Gazit, a former Military Intelligence commander. (2) According to Gazit, [11] "Israel's main task has not changed at all [since the demise of the USSR] and it remains of crucial importance. The geographical location of Israel at the centre of the Arab-Muslim Middle East predestines Israel to be a devoted guardian of stability in all the countries surrounding it. Its [role] is to protect the existing regimes: to prevent or halt the processes of

radicalization, and to block the expansion of fundamentalist religious zealousy.

For this purpose Israel will prevent changes occurring beyond Israel's borders [which it] will regard as intolerable, to the point of feeling compelled to use all its military power for the sake of their prevention or eradication."

In other words, Israel aims at imposing a hegemony on other Middle Eastern states. Needless to say, according to Gazit, Israel has a benevolent concern for the stability of the Arab regimes. In Gazit's view, by protecting Middle Eastern regimes, Israel performs a vital service for 'the industrially advanced states, all of which are keenly concerned with guaranteeing the stability in the Middle East'. He argues that without Israel the existing regimes of the region would have collapsed long ago and that they remain in existence only because of Israeli threats. While this view may be hypocritical, one should recall in such contexts La Rochefoucault's maxim that 'hypocrisy is the tax which wickedness pays to virtue'. Redemption of the Land is an attempt to evade paying any such tax.

Needless to say, I also oppose root and branch the Israeli non-ideological policies as they are so lucidly and correctly explained by Gazit. At the same time, I recognize that the dangers of the policies of Ben-Gurion of Sharon, motivated by 'Jewish ideology', are much worse than merely imperial policies, however criminal.

The results of policies of other ideologically motivated regimes point in the same direction. The existence of an important component of Israeli policy, which is based on 'Jewish ideology', makes its analysis politically imperative. This ideology is, in turn based on the attitudes of historic Judaism to non-Jews, one of the

main themes of this book. Those attitudes necessarily influence many Jews, consciously or unconsciously. Our task here is to discuss historic Judaism in real terms.

The influence on 'Jewish ideology' on many Jews will be stronger the more it is hidden from public discussion. Such discussion will, it is hoped, lead people take the same attitude towards Jewish chauvinism and the contempt displayed by so many Jews towards non-Jews (which will be documented below) as that commonly taken towards antisemitism and all other forms of xenophobia, chauvinism and racism. It is justly [12] assumed that only the full exposition, not only of antisemitism, but also of its historical roots, can be the basis of struggle against it. Likewise I am assuming that only the full exposition of Jewish chauvinism and religious fanaticism can be the basis of struggle against those phenomena. This is especially true today when, contrary to the situation prevailing fifty or sixty years ago, the political influence of Jewish chauvinism and religious fanaticism is much greater than that of antisemitism. But there is also another important consideration. I strongly believe that antisemitism and Jewish chauvinism can only be fought simultaneously.

A Closed Utopia?

Until such attitudes are widely adopted, the actual danger of Israeli policies based on 'Jewish ideology' remains greater than the danger of policies based on purely strategic considerations. The difference between the two kinds of policies was well expressed by Hugh Trevor-Roper in his essay Sir Thomas More and Utopia (3) in which he termed them Platonic and Machiavellian: "Machiavelli at least apologized for the methods which he thought necessary in politics. He regretted the necessity of force and fraud and did not call them by any

other name. But Plato and More sanctified them, provided that they were used to sustain their own Utopian republics."

In a similar way true believers in that Utopia called the 'Jewish state', which will strive to achieve the 'Biblical borders', are more dangerous than the grand strategists of Gazit's type because their policies are being sanctified either by the use of religion or, worse, by the use of secularized religious principles which retain absolute validity. While Gazit at least sees a need to argue that the Israel diktat benefits the Arab regimes, Ben-Gurion did not pretend that the re-establishment of the kingdom of David and Solomon will benefit anybody except the Jewish state.

Using the concepts of Platonism to analyse Israeli policies based on 'Jewish ideology' should not seem strange. It was noticed by several scholars, of whom the most important was Moses Hadas, who claimed that the foundations of 'classical Judaism', that is, of Judaism as it was established by talmudic sages, are based on Platonic influences and especially on the image of Sparta as it appears in Plato. (4)

According to Hadas, a crucial feature of the Platonic political system, adopted by Judaism as early as the Maccabean period (142-63 BC), was 'that every phase of human conduct be subject to religious sanctions which are in fact to be manipulated by the ruler'.

[13] There can be no better definition of 'classical Judaism' and of the ways in which the rabbis manipulated it than this Platonic definition. In particular, Hadas claims that Judaism adopted what 'Plato himself summarized [as] the objectives of his program', in the following well-known passage:

The principle thing is that no one, man or woman, should ever be without an officer set over him, and that none should get the mental habit of taking any step, whether in earnest or in jest, on his individual responsibility. In peace as in war he must live always with his eyes on his superior officer... In a word, we must train the mind not to even consider acting as an individual or know how to do it. (Laws, 942ab)

If the word 'rabbi' is substituted for 'an officer' we will have a perfect image of classical Judaism. The latter is still deeply influencing Israeli-Jewish society and determining to a large extent the Israeli policies.

It was the above quoted passage which was chosen by Karl Popper in *The Open Society and Its Enemies* as describing the essence of 'a closed society'. Historical Judaism and its two successors, Jewish Orthodoxy and Zionism, are both sworn enemies of the concept of the open society as applied to Israel. A Jewish state, whether based on its present Jewish ideology or, if it becomes even more Jewish in character than it is now, on the principles of Jewish Orthodoxy, cannot ever contain an open society. There are two choices which face Israeli-Jewish society. It can become a fully closed and warlike ghetto, a Jewish Sparta, supported by the labour of Arab helots, kept in existence by its influence on the US political establishment and by threats to use its nuclear power, or it can try to become an open society. The second choice is dependent on an honest examination of its Jewish past, on the admission that Jewish chauvinism and exclusivism exist, and on an honest examination of the attitudes of Judaism towards the non-Jews.[14]